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Istook, Chamber Trip to China Nets Results

Washington, DC -- Visits with major leaders of the People's Republic of China have opened doors for Oklahoma businesses, thanks to a delegation of twenty Oklahoma business leaders who just completed a 10-day mission to China, led by U.S. Rep. Ernest J. Istook, Jr. (OK-5th) and coordinated by the State Chamber of Oklahoma.

"We have never had better access to the level of leaders that we had on this trip," said Rush, who noted the delegation met with four different Provinces and five different cities. **"This was the Chamber's fifth trip to China, and Rep. Istook did an outstanding job of representing Oklahoma business interests. We not only hope to consummate several business deals in the near future, he helped us open doors to more areas of China's rapidly growing economy."**

Istook secured assurances from a key Provincial Governor to do business with Oklahoma companies in a specific industry. Details are under discussion at this time. Further, Istook's efforts opened doors to both Inner Mongolia and the Szechwan Province, whose leaders sought out the delegation after public presentations made by Istook and Chamber President and CEO Richard P. Rush. Business deals in the areas of transportation, oil and gas, medical research, telecommunications and more have been discussed with Chinese officials, with all currently undergoing more detailed talks.

China represents both a strategic commercial opportunity for Oklahoma businesses and an opening to expose more Chinese to the benefits of a free-market economy. China's economy has grown by at least 9% annually for more than 20 years. With a 1.3 billion population and a business and transportation infrastructure unable to meet their growing needs, business opportunities abound for Oklahoma, Istook said. **"China has over 100 cities with a population of a million or more and has tremendous needs for more energy, better transportation systems, and many more areas where Oklahoma has natural strengths. My goal is to establish working partnerships with key Chinese decision-makers and to open more specific opportunities for Oklahoma businesses. I am satisfied that we are on our way to tangible results,"** Istook said.

In addition to the meetings with government officials, Istook and the delegation met with key business leaders who already have a strong presence in China, such as Oklahoma City-based Kerr McGee Corporation and Boeing. Further, Istook met with China's version of the Federal Aviation Administration to talk about joint ventures currently underway between the two governments. The FAA is funded by Istook's appropriations sub-Committee. Oklahoma City has the largest single installation of the FAA in the United States, creating strong prospects for aviation-related businesses in China by Oklahoma companies.

"I will work with the Chamber and Oklahoma businesses to monitor our results and continue to open up China for more Oklahoma commerce," Istook said.